

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive information from said plurality of apparatuses and remotely control said plurality of apparatuses based on said information; and

an information collection unit configured to collect~~, based on said information presently received,~~ related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when said apparatus information is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an information processing unit configured to process said related information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and is collected by said information collection unit; and

an information transmission unit configured to ~~transmissively~~ connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing unit[[;]].

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an information setting unit configured to set said apparatus information in advance of collecting said related information, for which said collection process by said information collection unit is allowed.

Claim 4 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 1, wherein said information collected, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information collection unit is related to pre-maintenance.

Claim 5 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 1, wherein said information collected, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information collection unit is related to expendable supplies and material.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a group setting unit configured to set a group in advance of collecting said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]]said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 7 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising:

an information alteration and addition unit configured to perform alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing unit.

Claim 8 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising:

an information destination setting unit configured to set a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission unit.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising:

an information outputting unit configured to output said information processed by said information processing unit through at least one of [[,]] an image formation on a display device, a data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising:

an information transmitting unit configured to transmit said information processed by said information processing unit, ~~in case~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups [[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive information from said plurality of apparatuses and remotely control said plurality of apparatuses based on said information;

an information accumulation unit configured to accumulate apparatus information, ~~in~~
ease when said apparatus information is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~
an initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled; and

an information retrieval unit configured to retrieve, ~~based on said information~~
~~presently received~~, related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all
the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~
except a group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said apparatus information is
received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality
of apparatuses.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 11,
further comprising:

an information processing unit configured to process said related information which is
acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~being~~ is retrieved by said information
retrieval unit; and

an information transmission unit configured to ~~transmissively~~ connect to terminal
units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image
forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said
information processing unit.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 11,
further comprising:

an information setting unit configured to set said apparatus information in advance of
retrieving said related information, for which said retrieval ~~process~~ by said information
retrieval unit is allowed.

Claim 14 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 11, wherein said information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and being retrieved by said information retrieval unit is related to pre-maintenance.

Claim 15 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 11, wherein said information accumulated, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information accumulation unit is related to expendable supplies and material.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 11, further comprising:

a group setting unit configured to set a group in advance of retrieving said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]] said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 17 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 16, further comprising:

a plurality of communication adapters connected to said plurality of image forming apparatuses for communicating with said central control system,

wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to said communication adapters.

Claim 18 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 16, further comprising:

a plurality of communication adapters connected to said plurality of image forming apparatuses for communicating with said central control system,

wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to a predetermined number of said respective communication adapters.

Claim 19 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 16, wherein said plurality of image forming apparatuses are interconnected by way of communication networks incorporating a network control unit, and

wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to an IP address in said network system.

Claim 20 (Original): The remote control system according to claim 16, wherein said plurality of image forming apparatuses are interconnected by way of communication networks incorporating a network control unit, and

wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to a predetermined number of IP addresses in said network system.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising:

an information alteration and addition unit configured to perform alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing unit.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising:

an information destination unit configured to set a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission unit.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising:

an information outputting unit configured to output said information processed by said information processing unit through at least one of [[,]] an image formation on a display device, a data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice.

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): The remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising:

an information transmitting unit configured to transmit said information processed by said information processing unit [[,]] ~~in case where~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups[,] including at least an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive information from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~for remotely controlling~~ control said plurality of apparatuses based on said information;

an information collection unit configured to collect, ~~based on said information~~ presently received, related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all

the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~
except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when said apparatus information is
received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality
of apparatuses to be remotely controlled;

a first information processing unit configured to process said apparatus information
~~received from any one of said plurality of apparatuses;~~

a first information transmission unit configured to ~~transmissively~~ connect to terminal
units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image
forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said apparatus information processed by
said first information processing unit;

an information accumulation unit configured to accumulate said apparatus
information, ~~in case~~ when said apparatus information is received from ~~any one~~ said initiating
apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled;

an information retrieval unit configured to retrieve, ~~based on said information~~
~~presently received,~~ said related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included
in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in~~
~~case~~ except said group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said apparatus
information is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus
of said plurality of apparatuses;

a second information processing unit configured to process said apparatus information
received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses and retrieved
by said information retrieval unit;

a second information transmission unit configured to ~~transmissively~~ connect to the
terminal units so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently

transmitting said apparatus information processed by said second information processing unit; and

an information decision unit configured to determine whether or not an execution command is ~~send~~ sent to any one of ~~processing steps~~, said information collection unit, said first information processing unit, said first information transmission unit, said information retrieval unit, said second information processing unit, and said second information transmission unit.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): A method for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, comprising ~~the step of~~:

receiving information relayed to a central control system from said plurality of apparatuses;

controlling remotely said plurality of apparatuses based on said information;

collecting information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when [[said]] information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses;

processing received and collected information by information processing means;

~~transmissively~~ connecting said central control system to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses; and transmitting said information processed by said information processing means.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 26, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

providing alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing means.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 26, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

outputting said information processed by said information processing means through ~~the means of~~ at least one of an image formation on a display device, a data recording on a paper sheet or an audible voice.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 26, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

transmitting said information processed by said information processing means~~[[,]] in~~ ease when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 30 (Currently Amended): A method for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups~~[[,]]~~ including at least an image forming apparatus, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

receiving information relayed to a central control system from said plurality of apparatuses; ~~and~~

controlling remotely said plurality of apparatuses based on said information;

accumulating said information for said plurality of apparatuses in a memory unit, ~~in~~
ease when ~~[[said]]~~ information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and
material is received from ~~any one~~ an initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses;

retrieving related information from said memory unit, ~~based on said information~~
~~presently received, from~~ for all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups
~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted~~ except a group
corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said initiating apparatus sends said
information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material to said
central control system;

processing said received and retrieved information by information processing means;
~~transmissively~~ connecting said central control system to the terminal units provided
by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses;
and

transmitting said information processed by said information processing means.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 30, further
comprising ~~the step of~~:

performing alteration and addition onto said information processed by said
information processing means.

Claim 32 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 30, further
comprising ~~the step of~~:

outputting said information processed by said information processing means through
~~the means of~~ at least one of ~~[[,]]~~ an image formation on a display device, a data recording on a
paper sheet or an audible voice.

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 30, further comprising ~~the step of~~:

transmitting said information processed by said information processing means, ~~in case~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended): A central control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control system from said plurality of apparatuses, said central control system being included in a remote control system, said central control system comprising:

an information collection unit configured to collect, ~~based on said information presently received~~, related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when [[said]] information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled.

Claim 35 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 34, further comprising:

an information processing unit configured to process said related information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and is collected by said information collection unit; and

an information transmission unit configured to ~~transmissively~~ connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing unit[[:]].

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 34, further comprising:

an information setting unit configured to set said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material in advance of collecting said related information, for which said collection ~~process~~ by said information collection unit is allowed.

Claim 37 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 34, further comprising:

a group setting unit configured to set a group in advance of collecting said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]] said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 38 (Original): The central control system according to claim 35, further comprising:

an information alteration and addition unit configured to perform alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing unit.

Claim 39 (Original): The central control system according to claim 35, further comprising:

an information destination setting unit configured to set a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission unit.

Claim 40 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 35, further comprising:

an information outputting unit configured to output said information processed by said information processing unit through at least one of [[,]] an image formation on a display device, a recording data on a paper sheet or an audible voice.

Claim 41 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 35, further comprising:

an information transmitting unit configured to transmit said information processed by said information processing unit, ~~in case~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 42 (Canceled).

Claim 43 (Currently Amended): A central control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups [[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control system from said plurality of apparatuses, said central system being included in a remote control system, said central control system comprising:

an information accumulation unit configured to accumulate information, ~~in case~~ when said information is received by said central control system from any ~~one~~ apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled; and

an information retrieval unit configured to retrieve, ~~based on said information presently received,~~ related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when ~~[[said]]~~ apparatus information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses.

Claim 44 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 43, further comprising:

an information processing unit configured to process said related information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and is retrieved by said information retrieval unit; and

an information transmission unit configured to ~~transmissively~~ connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing unit~~[[;]]~~.

Claim 45 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 43, further comprising:

an information setting unit configured to set said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material in advance of retrieving said related information, for which said retrieval ~~process~~ by said information retrieval unit is allowed.

Claim 46 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 43, further comprising:

a group setting unit configured to set a group in advance of retrieving said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]] said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 47 (Original): The central control system according to claim 44, further comprising:

an information alteration and addition unit configured to perform alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing unit.

Claim 48 (Original): The central control system according to claim 44, further comprising:

an information destination setting unit configured to set a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission unit.

Claim 49 (Currently Amended): The central control system according to claim 44, further comprising:

an information transmitting unit configured to transmit said information processed by said information processing unit, ~~in case~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 50 (Currently Amended): A central control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided in a predetermined number of groups~~[[,]]~~ including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control system from said plurality of apparatuses, said central control system being included in a remote control system, said central control system comprising:

an information collection unit configured to collect, ~~based on said information presently received~~, related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when ~~[[said]]~~ information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled;

a first information processing unit configured to process said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses;

a first information transmission unit configured to ~~transmissively~~ connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmit said information processed by said first information processing unit;

an information accumulation unit configured to accumulate said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material, ~~in case~~ when said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled;

an information retrieval unit configured to retrieve, ~~based on said information presently received~~, said related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except said group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses;

a second information processing unit configured to process said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses and retrieved by said information retrieval unit;

a second information transmission unit configured to ~~transmissively~~ connect to the terminal units so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmit said information processed by said second information processing unit; and

a decision unit configured to determine whether or not an execution command is sent to ~~any~~ one of said information collection unit means, said first information processing ~~means~~ unit, said first information transmission ~~means~~ unit, said information retrieval ~~means~~ unit, said second information processing ~~means~~ unit, and said second information transmission ~~means~~ unit.

Claim 51 (Currently Amended): A computer accessible recording medium, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a central control system included in a remote control system to perform a method ~~step~~ for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided in a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control system from said plurality of apparatuses, ~~said central control system being included in a remote control system~~, said ~~step~~ method comprising:

collecting by an information collection unit ~~said~~ information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material ~~by information collection means~~ from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses when ~~said~~ apparatus information related to

pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses.

Claim 52 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 51, said method further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

processing by an information processing ~~means~~ unit said related information which is acquired by ~~any means of being received~~ from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~being~~ is collected by said information collection ~~means~~ unit;

~~transmissively~~ connecting said central control system to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, by an information transmission ~~means~~ unit; and

transmitting said information processed by said information processing ~~means~~ unit.

Claim 53 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 51, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

setting said apparatus information in advance of collecting said related information, for which said collection ~~process~~ by said information collection ~~means~~ unit is allowed.

Claim 54 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 51, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

setting a group in advance of collecting said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]] said predetermined number of groups

Claim 55 (Currently Amended): A computer accessible recording medium, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a central control system included in a

remote control system to perform a method steps for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided in a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control system from said plurality of apparatuses, ~~said central control system being included in a remote control system~~, said steps method comprising:

accumulating said information, ~~in case~~ when said information is received by said central control system from any ~~one~~ apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled; and

~~retrieving, based on said information presently received,~~ related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when [[said]] information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses.

Claim 56 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 55, said method further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

processing by an information processing ~~means~~ unit said related information which is acquired ~~by any means of being received~~ from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~being~~ is retrieved by an information retrieval ~~means~~ unit;

~~transmissively~~ connecting said central control system to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses[[,]] by an information transmission ~~means~~ unit; and

transmitting said information processed by said information processing ~~means~~ unit.

Claim 57 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 55, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

setting said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material in advance of accumulating said related information, for which said retrieval ~~process~~ by said information retrieval ~~means~~ unit is allowed.

Claim 58 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 55, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

setting a group in advance of accumulating said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into ~~[[a]]~~ said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 59 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 52, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

performing alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing ~~means~~ unit.

Claim 60 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 52, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

setting a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission ~~means~~ unit.

Claim 61 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 52, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

outputting said information processed by said information processing ~~means~~ unit through ~~the means of~~ at least one of ~~[[,]]~~ an image formation on a display device, a data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice.

Claim 62 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 52, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

transmitting said information processed by said information processing ~~means, in case~~ unit when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 63 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 56, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

performing alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing ~~means~~ unit.

Claim 64 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 56, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

setting a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission ~~means~~ unit.

Claim 65 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 56, said method further comprising ~~the step of~~:

outputting said information processed by said information processing ~~means~~ unit through ~~the means of~~ at least one of ~~[[,]]~~ an image formation on a display device, a recording data on a paper sheet, or an audible voice.

Claim 66 (Currently Amended): The computer accessible recording medium according to claim 56, said method further comprising ~~the step of:~~

transmitting said information processed by said information processing ~~means, in case~~ unit when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 67 (Currently Amended): A computer accessible recording medium, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a central control system included in a remote control system to perform a method steps for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control system from said plurality of apparatuses, ~~said central control system being included in a remote control system,~~ said steps method comprising:

~~collecting, based on said information presently received,~~ related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when ~~[[said]]~~ information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by information collecting means;

processing said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses by first information processing means;

~~transmissively~~ connecting said central control system to respective terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming

apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said first information processing means;

accumulating said related information, ~~in the case where~~ when said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, said related information being transmitted by first information transmitting means;

retrieving, ~~based on said information presently received,~~ said related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted,~~ in case except said group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses, said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material being retrieved by information retrieving means;

processing said related information by second information processing means, said related information received from said any ~~[[one]]~~ apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses and retrieved by said information retrieval means;

~~transmissively~~ connecting said central control system to said terminal units provided by ~~[[a]]~~ said plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said second information transmission means; and

determining whether an execution command is sent to ~~any one of~~ said information collection means, said first information processing means, said first information transmission means, said information retrieval means, said second information processing means, and said second information transmission means, is allowed.

Claim 68 (Currently Amended): A remote control ~~means~~ system for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, comprising:

central control means, comprising at least computer means, for receiving information from said plurality of apparatuses and for remotely controlling said plurality of apparatuses based on said information; and

information collection means for collecting, ~~based on said information presently received,~~ related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when [[said]] apparatus information is received by said central control ~~system~~ means from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled.

Claim 69 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 68, further comprising:

information processing means for processing said related information which is acquired ~~by any means of being received~~ from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~being~~ is collected by said information collection means; and

information transmission means for ~~transmissively~~ connecting to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing means[[;]].

Claim 70 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 68, further comprising:

means for setting said apparatus information in advance of collecting said related information, for which said collection ~~process~~-by said information collection means is allowed.

Claim 71 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 68, wherein said information collected, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information collection means is related to pre-maintenance.

Claim 72 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 68, wherein said information collected, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information collection means is related to expendable supplies and material.

Claim 73 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 68, further comprising:

group setting means for setting a group in advance of collecting said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]] said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 74 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 69, further comprising:

means for performing alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing means.

Claim 75 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 69, further comprising:

means for setting a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission means.

Claim 76 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 69, further comprising:

means for outputting said information processed by said information processing means through ~~the means of~~ at least one of ~~[[,]]~~ an image formation on a display device, a data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice.

Claim 77 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 69, further comprising:

means for transmitting said information processed by said information processing means; ~~in case~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one~~ terminal unit of the terminal units.

Claim 78 (Currently Amended): A remote control ~~means~~ system for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups~~[[,]]~~ including at least an image forming apparatus, comprising:

central control means, comprising at least computer means, for receiving information from said plurality of apparatuses and for remotely controlling said plurality of apparatuses based on said information;

information accumulation means for accumulating apparatus information, ~~in case~~ when said apparatus information is received by said central control means from ~~any one~~ an initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled; and

information retrieval means for retrieving, ~~based on said information presently received,~~ related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said apparatus information is received by said central control means from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses.

Claim 79 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 78, further comprising:

information processing means for processing said related information which is acquired ~~by any means of being received~~ from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~being~~ is retrieved by said information retrieval means; and

information transmission means for ~~transmissively connect~~ connecting to terminal means provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing means.

Claim 80 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 78, further comprising:

means for setting said apparatus information in advance of retrieving said related information, for which said retrieval ~~process~~ by said information retrieval means is allowed.

Claim 81 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 78, wherein said information which is acquired ~~by any means of being received~~ from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~being~~ is retrieved by said information retrieval means is related to pre-maintenance.

Claim 82 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 78, wherein said related information acquired from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled by said information accumulation means is related to expendable supplies and material.

Claim 83 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 78, further comprising:

group setting means for setting a group in advance of accumulating said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]] said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 84 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 83, further comprising:

a plurality of communication adapters means connected to said plurality of image forming apparatuses for communicating with said central control means,

wherein said group setting means divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to said communication adapters means.

Claim 85 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 83, further comprising:

a plurality of communication adapters means connected to said plurality of image forming apparatuses for communicating with said central control means,

wherein said group setting means divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to a predetermined number of said respective communication adapters means.

Claim 86 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 83,

wherein said plurality of image forming apparatuses are interconnected by way of communication network means incorporating network control means, and

wherein said group setting means divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to an IP address in said communication network means.

Claim 87 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 83,

wherein said plurality of image forming apparatuses are interconnected by way of communication network means incorporating network control means, and

wherein said group setting means divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to a predetermined number of IP addresses in said communication network means.

Claim 88 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 79, further comprising:

means for performing alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing means.

Claim 89 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 79, further comprising:

means for setting a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission means.

Claim 90 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 79, further comprising:

means for outputting said information processed by said information processing means through ~~the means of~~ at least one of ~~[[,]]~~ an image formation on a display device, a data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice.

Claim 91 (Currently Amended): The remote control ~~means~~ system according to claim 79, further comprising:

means for transmitting said information processed by said information processing means, ~~in case where~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one of the terminal units~~ terminal means.

Claim 92 (Currently Amended): A remote control ~~means~~ system for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups ~~[[,]]~~ including at least an image forming apparatus, comprising:

central control means, comprising at least computer means, for receiving information from said plurality of apparatuses and for remotely controlling said plurality of apparatuses based on said information;

information collection means for collecting, ~~based on said information presently received,~~ related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when ~~[[said]]~~ apparatus information is received by said central control means from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled;

first information processing means for processing said apparatus information received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses;

first information transmission means for ~~transmissively~~ connecting to terminal means provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said first information processing means;

information accumulation means for accumulating said related information, ~~in case~~ when said apparatus information is received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled;

information retrieval means for retrieving, ~~based on said information presently received,~~ said related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except said group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said apparatus information is received by said central control means ~~from any one of said plurality of apparatuses;~~

second information processing means for processing said apparatus information received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses and retrieved by said information retrieval means;

second information transmission means for ~~transmissively~~ connecting to the terminal means so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said second information processing means; and

means for determining whether or not an execution command is sent to ~~any~~ one of ~~processing steps~~; said information collection means, said first information processing means, said first information transmission means, said information retrieval means, said second information processing means, and said second information transmission means.

Claim 93 (Currently Amended): A central control ~~means~~ system for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control means from said plurality of apparatuses, said central control ~~means-system~~ being included in a remote control ~~means~~ system, said central control system comprising:

information collection means for collecting, ~~based on said information presently received~~, related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when [[said]] information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control ~~means~~ system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled.

Claim 94 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 93, further comprising:

information processing means for processing said related information which is acquired ~~by any means of being received~~ from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~being~~ is collected by said information collection means;

information transmission means for ~~transmissively~~ connecting to a plurality of terminal means provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said related information processed by said information processing means[[:]].

Claim 95 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 93, further comprising:

means for setting said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material in advance of collecting said related information, for which said collection ~~process~~ by said information collection means is allowed.

Claim 96 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 93, further comprising:

group setting means for setting a group in advance of collecting said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]] said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 97 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 94, further comprising:

means for performing alteration and addition onto said related information processed by said information processing means.

Claim 98 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 94, further comprising:

means for setting a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission means.

Claim 99 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 94, further comprising:

means for outputting said information processed by said information processing means through ~~the means of~~ at least one of an image formation on a display device, a recording data on a paper sheet, or an audible voice.

Claim 100 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 94, further comprising:

means for transmitting said information processed by said information processing means, ~~in case~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one of the~~ terminal means of said plurality of terminal means.

Claim 101 (Canceled).

Claim 102 (Currently Amended): A central control ~~means~~ system for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control ~~means~~

system from said plurality of apparatuses, said central control ~~means~~ system being included in a remote control ~~means~~ system, said central control system comprising:

information accumulation means for accumulating information, ~~in case~~ when said information is received by said central control ~~means~~ system from any ~~one~~ apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled; and

information retrieval means for retrieving, ~~based on said information presently received~~, related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when ~~[[said]]~~ information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control ~~means~~ system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses.

Claim 103 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 102, further comprising:

information processing means for processing said related information which is acquired ~~by any means of being received~~ from said plurality of apparatuses and ~~being~~ is retrieved by said information retrieval means; and

information transmission means for ~~transmissively~~ connecting to a plurality of terminal means provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing means~~[[;]]~~.

Claim 104 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 102, further comprising:

means for setting said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material in advance of retrieving said related information, for which said retrieval ~~process~~ by said information retrieval means is allowed.

Claim 105 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 102, further comprising:

group setting means for setting a group in advance of retrieving said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into [[a]] said predetermined number of groups.

Claim 106 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 103, further comprising:

means for performing alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing means.

Claim 107 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 103, further comprising:

means for setting a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission means.

Claim 108 (Currently Amended): The central control ~~means~~ system according to claim 103, further comprising:

means for transmitting said information processed by said information processing means, ~~in case~~ when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any ~~one of the~~ terminal means of said plurality of terminal means.

Claim 109 (Currently Amended): A central control ~~means~~ system for controlling a plurality of apparatuses divided in a predetermined number of groups[[,]] including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by said central control means from said plurality of apparatuses, said central control ~~means~~ system being included in a remote control means unit, said central control system comprising:

information collection means for collecting, ~~based on said information presently received~~, related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except a group corresponding to an initiating apparatus when ~~[[said]]~~ information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control ~~means~~ system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled;

first information processing means for processing said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses;

first information transmission means for ~~transmissively~~ connecting to a plurality of terminal means provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmit said related information processed by said first information processing means;

information accumulation means for accumulating said related information, ~~in case~~ when said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled;

information retrieval means for retrieving, ~~based on said information presently received, said~~ related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups ~~other than the one from which said information is originally transmitted, in case~~ except said group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by said central control means system from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses;

second information processing means for processing said information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material received from ~~any one~~ said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses and retrieved by said information retrieval means;

second information transmission means for ~~transmissively~~ connecting to the plurality of terminal means so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmit said information processed by said second information processing means; and

means for determining whether or not an execution command is sent to any one of ~~processing steps~~, said information collection means, said first information processing means, said first information transmission means, said information retrieval means, said second information processing means, and said second information transmission means.